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14 February 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Observations upon the report of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa report to the National Security Council.

1. I return to you herewith copy #17 of the report of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa committee to the National Security Council, dated 1 January 1949. Pursuant to your request, I am submitting to you in this memorandum my comments upon those portions of the report which pertain specifically to the Office of Policy Coordination, its activities and its relationships to various of the other offices of the Central Intelligence Agency. I understand that you have likewise solicited the comments of the chiefs of other offices and divisions of the Agency which are applicable to their respective areas of responsibility and I trust that my rather limited observations may be of some assistance to you in your overall consideration of this matter.

2. The most important feature of the report having direct application to OPC is the recommendation that the Office of Policy Coordination, the Office of Special Operations and the Contact Branch of the Office of Operations be integrated under a single overall direction in a new "Operations Division". I agree with this recommendation and with the reasoning which supports it and I further agree that any such new office should be established and should operate as a distinctly separate entity, having a considerable degree of autonomy within the Agency. The considerations which are marshalled in support of this conclusion and recommendation appear at pp. 94, 96, 97, 99, 100 and 131 through 134 in the report. It was my original conviction that a very close degree of coordination between the three activities mentioned was essential and inevitable and I believe that our experience to date has furnished many proofs of this basic premise.

The report itself takes cognizance of a technical difficulty in this regard which arises from the anomalous setup of the Office of Policy Coordination within the Central Intelligence Agency. This arrangement, which was originally ordained by the National Security Council, could doubtless be revised as a part of the very important readjustment which is the substance of this recommendation.

3. Of particular

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3. Of particular importance to the effective and secure operation of OPC--or of OSO or the proposed new "Operations Division", is the recommendation that these covert operations have their own administrative support services. The arguments which support this recommendation are, I believe, conclusive and are set forth at pp. 10, 32, 116 and 136. The gist of these contentions is as follows.

The general administrative problems of these covert operating offices are unique because of their secrecy and consequent security requirements. They differ importantly from that part of the work of CIA which is concerned with the coordination of activities and the more or less overt work of research and analysis. The security of covert operations is inevitably prejudiced when overt and covert administrative units are placed together. Of equal importance is the fact that the unique character of secret operations renders inapplicable most ordinary rules of administration. One of the results of the moving of the administrative support from the direct authority of the officials responsible for secret operations is that administrative considerations are found to guide and even control intelligence and operational policy. Any gains in overall efficiency which may appear to result from the centralization of all administrative services are much more than offset by the resultant losses in the efficiency, effectiveness and security of operations--and it is submitted that the latter should be the paramount consideration.

4. Although the comment at p. 37 in regard to the serious results of delay in obtaining security clearances is obvious, it is nevertheless of sufficient importance to warrant mention in this memorandum. While recognizing the essentiality of care and thoroughness in personnel investigations, it is imperative that a degree of flexibility be retained in the system of security clearances if the agency is to fulfill its responsibilities. In a limited number of cases, it will be necessary to request waivers on persons who have long and well known records of loyalty and responsibility in the public service. The seven way name check is no doubt desirable in all cases but the full investigation in cases of the kind mentioned should be allowed to go on after the individuals have entered upon their duties. Moreover, there must be a balancing of interests as between absolute security on the one hand and the necessity of obtaining talent, imagination, initiative and knowledge in certain fields.

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6. I should also like to make a comment for the record upon the observations of the committee at p. 123 about the insecurity of the present physical setup of the Washington Headquarters of OSO (and OPC). I agree that it is very prejudicial to the security of the personnel and contacts of these secret operations offices to be isolated in a conspicuously identifiable building, and that it would be vastly preferable for them to be covered in a large establishment having no previous OSS and CIA taint and having so many services and visitors that the identification of the staff members and their visitors would be rendered most difficult. I fully recognize that because of the drastic shortage of government housing space in Washington, this criticism is easier to make than to remedy, but I nevertheless believe that it should be made the subject of serious and continued consideration by all concerned. The problem is aggravated by the inability to date of the Services Branch to provide sufficient space for present OPC staff personnel even in Temporary L Building.

7. The observations of the committee at pp. 148 and 149 of the report concerning the repute of intelligence as a career within the armed services has an important bearing upon the work of the Central Intelligence Agency and OPC. Because of the important use which CIA should always make of military intelligence personnel, as well as the many relationships which CIA must have with the armed services in order to be an effective and useful agency, it would be to the interest of all concerned if steps could be taken to improve the lot and prospects of service intelligence personnel.

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FRANK G. WISNER
Assistant Director of
Policy Coordination

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